

# Vanguard

a libertarian communist journal

## AN OPEN LETTER TO LEON TROTSKY

February 23, 1937

Leon Trotsky

Mexico, D. F.

Dear Comrade Trotsky:

*Just two short decades have passed... twenty years ago you shared with Lenin a place on the revolutionary horizon surpassed by none... today, you flee from country to country, a hounded man, finding for the moment a temporary haven in Mexico. Sorrow, bitterness and the weight of years have greyed your hair and stooped your military shoulders. Even your life hangs by the barest of threads, for Stalin and his gang of international hoodlums will not cease their scurrilous attacks upon your person until they have completely silenced your talented, excoriating pen and your voice that serves so well to uncover the evil thing that masquerades under the cloak of Socialism.*

*Libertarian opinion the world over feels a deep sympathy for your plight and indignation at the horrible predicament in which your Russian followers find themselves, caught in the snares of Stalin who hunts them as the Czarist nobility hunted the beasts of the Taiga.*

*And yet, Comrade Trotsky, despite our devotion to the cause of Freedom; despite our deep hatred for all that Stalin represents... our knowledge of previous Russian events, our experience with a Trotsky who ruled, forces us to pause in our anger to pose a few queries. For, in the true historic sense, are you not more responsible than Stalin for the conditions which exist in Russia today? Did you not beget Stalin? We maintain that without a Trotsky there could have been no Stalin... that Stalin is your creation, your Frankenstein!*

*What makes possible the activities of the Stalin machine if not the concentration of power in the hands*

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# KROPOTKIN AS HISTORIAN

DR. JACOB SHATSKY

A fragment of a more extended work on the subject

Among the thinkers who have reflected deeply on the nature of the historical process, Kropotkin occupies a foremost position, although he wrote no particular work on the subject.

In his works such as "Ethics", "Words of a Rebel" and especially in "The Great French Revolution" are scattered many ideas which, if systematized, could give a clear picture of Kropotkin's views on history.

In contrast to the reactionary school of Hippolyte Taine and his followers who saw in revolutions only eruptions of wild and blind destructive elements, inherent in the masses, Kropotkin believed that the masses are always the main constructive and not destructive motive power of history. For Kropotkin the masses combine instinct with reason. The instinct is the inborn sense of justice that moves the mass of the people. Reason is the application of will at the suitable moment for the achievement of justice.

"The people's instinct never errs" says Kropotkin in his "Words of a Rebel". "This instinct creates everything that we possess. For this reason, anarchism is a product of this very same instinct".

And Anarchism is a product of this instinct.

"If Anarchism and Communism were products of scientific research and philosophic meditation", he writes in the "Words of a Rebel", "they would find no response. But these two principles are born within the people themselves.... And the people greet with joy every one who exposes in lucid form the ideas that are born in its own midst".

In another place he gives more explicitly his view on historical processes.

"In all times two opposing tendencies have conflicted in the human society. On one side the people, the masses developed in the form of customs, many institutions necessary to make social life possible, to maintain peace, to settle disputes, and to foster that mutual aid necessary for any common undertaking. On the other hand there have always been sorcerers and magic-makers, rain-makers, oracles, priests; they were the first who claimed to have an undertaking of nature, the founders of religious cults. As a parallel development with the first representatives of science and religion, we find people who were considered to be the guardians of folk legends and old customs and to whom everybody had to go in case of misfortune or dissension. They preserved in their minds all the laws, and in case of a dispute one had to appeal to them as arbiters. Besides that they were for a time the leaders of the fighting units, by virtue of the belief of the people that these leaders possessed the ability to insure victory in battle. They knew the secret of poisoning the weapons and also possessed other secrets necessary in warfare. These groups of people, from time immemorial used to organize secretly amongst themselves in order to preserve and hand down from generation to generation the secrets of their special knowledge. They used to get together in order to make agreements among themselves for the purpose of ruling over the people, to keep them in fear and force the people to work for them".

This quotation from Kropotkin's "Modern Science and Anarchism" contains the quintessence of his philosophy of history which is now being confirmed by all younger historians.

Kropotkin correctly grasped the fundamental characteristic of the historical process. The dominant classes constitute an alliance of militarist and the professional religious leaders. The first supply the physical force for the subjection of the masses; the others supply the spiritual "ideology" that justifies the subjection.

This method of discovering the two main tendencies of

the historical process Kropotkin very skillfully applied in his monumental work "The Great French Revolution". And rightly he complained that very much was written about the revolution in France, but more about its external appearance than its internal workings.

"The parliamentary history of the revolution", writes Kropotkin, "its wars and politics, were investigated and described in great detail. But the people's history of the revolution has not been written yet; the role of the people, villages and cities in that movement, has not yet been discovered and recorded. Of the two streams which created the revolution, the intellectual stream is well-known, but the second stream, the masses, has hardly been touched upon".

This was true in 1909 when Kropotkin published his history of the French Revolution. But since that time the great French historian Mathiez (who died a few years ago) achieved a great deal in exploring the mass element in the French Revolution.

In his interpretation of the revolution Kropotkin introduced many important historico-philosophical movements that were not known before. He demonstrated that the bourgeoisie represents the ideology and consequently the politics of the revolution, while the people stand for economics, for the element of action and rebellion. The people's activity is for Kropotkin the central axis of the historical process in revolution. And the carriers of this activity are the anarchists.

This is how he characterizes the anarchists of the revolution:

"First of all, the Anarchists are not a party. Their place is outside of the convent. They are revolutionaries who are scattered all over France. They are devoted heart and soul to the revolution. They know its needs. They love it and they work and live for it. Their proper place is the street. Their method of work is to uncover the will of the masses and not the bourgeois point of view of public opinion. Their present weapon is revolt. By the use of that weapon they exert pressure upon representatives of the people and on government, and while they must exert all possible efforts to inspire the people and go along with them to storm the gates they must prepare the attack and then fight in the ranks of the people. And the day when the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people is gone, they will vanish into the forgotten past. Their opinions are clear and definite. Republic! Certainly. Equality before the law! Of course. But that is not all. Far from it. Shall they achieve economic freedom with the aid of political freedom, as the bourgeoisie would have it? They know that it is impossible. That is why they want true economic freedom. Land for all... Economic equality — in the language of the time the name for this was the equalization of the estates".

But this economic freedom is destroyed by the priests of the revolution. They established parties, misled the people and made every effort to prevent the revolution from running its full course, from working out its volcanic power toward full completion. Kropotkin is therefore very severe toward all so called leaders of the revolution; because every one of them was hampering the revolution in the name of laws he created, misrepresenting them as the laws of the people.

The main forces of the revolution Kropotkin finds not in the Convent but in the communes that were according to him, "the soul of the great revolution".

Melliet with his book, "Les Sections de Paris Pendant la Revolution", which appeared in 1898, influenced very strongly Kropotkin's opinions about the part played by

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## Problems of Revolution in Spain

SENEX

Every great revolution has its ups and downs, its alternating phases of development characterized by great outbursts of creative energy on one hand and a purely defensive attitude on the other.

The Spanish revolution is now going through the second phase. It has entered into a period of retrenchment, consolidation of positions won during the days of storm and stress, thus giving the impression of retreat before the gathering forces of opposition. It is becoming aware of an ever greater extent of obstacles and growing centers of opposition organized for the purpose of checking its further course of development.

This course demands the carrying out of revolutionary policies along the basic lines of the drive initiated by the great changes taking place after the events of July 19th, 1936, for, significant as those changes are in themselves, they can be regarded but as the first steps in the realization of the integral program of revolutionary reconstruction. The seizures of factories and their management by workers committees constituted a very important move in the direction of such a program. Everyone who has given some thought to the problem of the transitional period realizes that it is only through such partial realizations that the social revolution moves toward its larger program of building up a socialized economy. There are no ready made blue prints for the building up of the latter. And were such available, they could not be used for the purposes of a libertarian and a democratic revolution which demands a certain leeway for the spontaneous action of the masses of workers guided by their own experience and not by the "scientific" plans of bureaucratic institutions.

But it is also clear that partial socializations are only temporary expedients. When workers of a certain plant or even of an industry run it for their own benefit only, as it came to prevail in many a part of Spain, they are getting the necessary experience for the democratic control of the socialized economy as a whole, but they are yet some distance off from having realized such an economic order.

The collectivization of agriculture, even when

carried to the logical end of village communism, still leaves the major task of socialized economy untackled. Village communes cannot exist as independent economic units: they have to establish some form of exchange with the cities demanding on the part of the latter a certain mobility of resources and a flexibility of organization which can be obtained only by a planned economy of a socialist nature.

This means that general funds must be created out of the earnings of the industry as a whole to be used for the reorganization and expansion of some of its branches. It also means the retrenchment of other branches of economy (especially necessary in a period of war and the resulting shrinkage of some of the markets) and the ability to transfer the workers from such branches of economy to others needing expansion.

Without the full control of the credit apparatus such deep going plans of social transformations cannot be effected. Not only do they require the socialization of existing credit facilities (and in the first place, of course, the socialization of banks) but also the power to create new forms of credit demanded by the needs of a revolutionary economy. (Too close a dependence upon the present supply of precious metals may throttle the development of such an economy.)

### Necessary to deepen revolution now

Were the Spanish revolution free to pursue the course initiated by the first steps taken after the events of July 19, it would have already set itself the larger tasks of building up a libertarian economy of a planned nature. The inadequacy of partial socializations have been felt very acutely by the mass of workers, and sentiment is more than ripe for their inclusion into the framework of a more fully socialized economy.

There is also a growing realization of the need of proceeding with a more drastic policy in regard to the equalization of income and the curtailment of many of the privileges of the middle classes in regard to consumption which they have been exer-



cising as a result of this inequality. This is dictated not only by a heightened sense of revolutionary equity but also by the realization that such inequalities interfere to an ever growing extent with the revolutionary mobilization of economic resources. The organization of a planned exchange with the villages clashes with the existing free market. And in measure that the latter is eliminated, new principles of distribution are being worked out into which the free spending of the middle classes fits hardly at all.

Plans have already been perfected for the control of the enterprises by the syndicates, the creation of general funds for industry as a whole, and the setting up of general planning bodies, based upon and controlled by the syndicates, for the purposes of reorganizing the economy along the lines of a general scheme of socialization. And as far as plans go, the credit problem has been solved along the same lines. The socialization of credit and its control by the leading organs of the syndicates has long ago been decided upon by the militant section of the working class.

### Growing obstacles to revolution

And with all that the practical realization is meeting with ever greater obstacles. The course of revolutionary achievements has been slowed down considerably during the last months. The development of the revolution along the lines of the first achievements is interrupted with increasing frequency, leaving the revolutionary structure in almost as chaotic a form in which it emerged during the first period of the revolution. Socialized enterprises have to apply for credit to the government which issues it — very often quite reluctantly — without any general plans. The socialistic mobilization of resources has not yet been undertaken, and the elements of capitalist economy are still allowed too large a place in the general functioning of the new social life. The free market is still an important factor in the supply of the cities, and all attempts to displace the private trader from the strategic position of an intermediary between the city and the country have been frustrated by a widespread system of hidden and overt sabotage on the part of an influential sector of the anti-fascist front.

The slowing down of the course of revolutionary development in Spain was brought about not by the war itself but by the necessity, imposed by the latter, of compromising with the anti-revolutionary forces. It is the power gained by the latter as a result of such a compromise that is used in attempts to block the forward course of the revolution. They cannot stop it altogether, but they do succeed in slowing it down so as to produce the apparent impression of a standstill.

Among those forces the most powerful one, acting as a rallying center for the others, is the Soviet government. The Spanish revolution is paying very heavily for the necessity, imposed upon it by the tragic war situation, of leaning upon the Soviet government. It is paying the price of a necessary compromise with a powerful force *that is*

*inimical to its basic drives and that extorted as the price of its aid the control of certain strategic positions which have since been used for the purpose of rallying all the anti-revolutionary forces for a common stand against the revolution.*

### The attempt to deflate the revolution

It is no secret now that the Soviet government made its aid contingent upon the fulfillment of certain conditions. And most important among them was the demand to switch back the revolution to the lines of bourgeois democracy. (The well informed *Sozialistische Stimme* favorably disposed toward the "achievements of Soviet Russia in Spain", definitely states that Soviet Russia did try to impose this condition.)

It was nothing but an attempt, since the anarcho-syndicalist movement of Spain could not be bullied into an abandonment of its basic revolutionary position. The revolutionary achievements of the first period were not given up. Catalonia and the other revolutionary provinces did not go back to the pre-revolutionary conditions as demanded by the communist-bourgeois block. But while the latter was not strong enough to enforce its demands to deflate the revolution, it did prove to be of sufficient power to seriously interfere with the forward course of revolutionary reconstruction. The prestige gained by the Soviet government as a result of its aid, the strategic positions won for its allies — the socialist and bourgeois parties of Spain — as a condition of further continuance of this aid, deprived the anarchist movement of some of its power to sweep the larger masses of workers and peasants into the revolutionary process of building up new forms of life. The power of the anarchist movement of Spain lies not only in the fact that in some provinces of Spain it represents the majority of workers. It is the vanguard of the revolution; it stands for policies which represent the logical line of revolutionary development. The full socialization of economic life and its control by the workers syndicates (industrial unions) are the logical goals of a revolution like the Spanish which started with the confiscation of big industries and land estates by the unions of workers and peasants.

That means that in measure that the revolution expands large masses of workers and peasants are swept into the orbit of anarchist influence even in those provinces which were formerly dominated by the Marxist parties and inasmuch as the latter do not want to see their influence vanish overnight, they have to yield to the revolutionary pressure of the masses and let themselves be towed by the anarchists toward the larger aims of the revolution.

This is what took place in the first period of the revolution. The Socialist party and the trade union bureaucracy of the socialist controlled unions (UGT) had to yield to the pressure of the rank and file workers who were swept into a course of bold revolutionary policy by the example of anarchist initiative and once they entered upon that course, they had to keep in step with logical unfoldment of a revolutionary situation. The logic of worker's



management of such enterprises placed before the workers the larger task of coordinating their work control led to confiscation of enterprises and the through the medium of industrial organization.

This was the idea of pacts and alliances eagerly sought by the anarchist movement. It was necessary to draw the larger and more backward masses of workers and peasants into some sort of revolutionary action which would teach the masses the valuable lessons of socialist economics. A United Front with the rank and file of the conservative unions on the basis of revolutionary reconstruction would finally break down the resistance of the leadership and gradually win it over to some sort of cooperation with the revolution. And even a half hearted cooperation was deemed by the anarchists far more preferable to open warfare with the consequent necessity of a dictatorship of one section of the working class over the other.

The interference of the Soviet government led, however, to the stiffening of the resistance on the part of the socialist and trade union bureaucracy. They received a powerful weapon for their struggle against the recalcitrant rank and file membership. That was the threat of the Soviet government to withdraw its aid if the workers persisted in their attempt to push the revolution to its logical end. And in face of what seemed then the imminent fall of Madrid this argument had an intimidating effect upon the mass of workers and peasants.

But that was only the first step in the concerted move of the block of the Communist, Socialist and bourgeois parties to check the forward course of the social revolution. It weakened the anarchist movement, narrowing down its sphere of influence, but it did not succeed in forcing the anarchists to go back upon the conquests already made in the most revolutionary provinces, the strongholds of their influence where they dominate the situation by sheer numerical strength. To dislodge them from those strongholds, to deprive them of any revolutionary initiative, a drive was initiated to gain the most strategic positions in the regional and central government and relegate the CNT (anarcho-syndicalist federation of labor) to a position of inferiority which would prevent it from playing any decisive role in the struggle for power. A hard bargain was driven with the CNT for the control of those positions, always wielding the club of Russian aid over the heads of the sincere revolutionists. And in view of the tragic situation existing several months ago can anyone blame the anarchists of Spain for going quite far in their concessions to this united block of politicians?

The most resolute attempt to wrest the control from the anarchists was undertaken in respect to the army. The model of the new army to be built according to Russian plans and designs. It is enough to compare the decrees about the institution of political commissariats introduced several months ago into the army, with the Russian army to discover the guiding hand of those documents. Before those decrees were published the numerically insignificant Communist party of Spain already had the

list of 200 candidates for the positions of political commissars. And needless to say, the control of the War Ministry by the Communists (nominally it is Socialist) made the appointment of those candidates of the Communist party a foregone conclusion.

Next came the control of the war apparatus itself. In the Madrid Defense Committee the control of this apparatus is entirely in the hands of the Communists; in the central government this apparatus is permeated with communist influences. Those influences, as well as the control of the Madrid Defense Committee were obtained not as a reflection of the strength of the party in the country but solely under the pressure of the Soviet government which saw its chance of subduing the Spanish revolution by extorting, under the threat of withdrawal of its aid, the most important positions of command.

The same policy was tried in respect of the control of the police which was gradually strengthened with the view of building up a bulwark in the rear against the revolution. The curtailment of the committees, concentration of great power in the hands of the government, attempts to centralize such power and under the refrain of the need of a "strong government" to eliminate the workers' syndicates from the decisive role which they still exercise in the life of the revolution, — such were the clearly outlined policies of the bloc of socialist, liberal and communist politicians cemented into a solid power by the realization of the strategic position held by the Soviet government. The same parties and forces which in the first period of the revolution were only holding on to the edge of political life, whose very existence was contingent upon the tolerance of a libertarian revolution, forced themselves into positions of command where they could hamstring the revolution in numerous ways.

Thus far the combined efforts of all those forces have only resulted in producing a stalemate. The anarchists have not yielded their basic positions in regard to the revolution. In Catalonia they have a sufficient grip on the situation to thwart any attempts to dislodge them from the commanding positions to which they are entitled by their numbers and revolutionary initiative. They are firm as ever upon continuing the course of revolution even during the war. But every forward step they are making is now meeting the well organized opposition of the anti-revolutionary bloc entrenched in the government apparatus and in the numerous strategic positions gained during this period of Soviet ascendancy. The program of land collectivization agreed upon in the pact between the anarchist and socialist trade unions, is openly sabotaged. The consolidation of collectivized enterprises under the management and control of the industrial unions is thwarted in numerous ways. And a consistent drive is carried on to eliminate the unions, cooperatives, village committees from their leading positions and turn them into the subservient instruments of a "strong government".

That this stalemate will end very soon, with the revolution breaking down this newly organized



resistance, very few who have been watching the later trend of events can doubt. The anarchists have been yielding up to a certain point — and that is where the further continuance of the revolution is made possible. As long as that point was not reached, they continued their gigantic effort on behalf of the revolution even when forced to do it at a slowed down tempo. And certainly the respite gained was well worth the loss in respect to the tempo of revolutionary achievement. It would, perhaps be worth while for the Marxist critics of the compromises entered into by the anarchists to re-read their history of the Russian revolution. To condemn the anarchists for compromising with the Soviet government and uphold Lenin's compromise with the German government in 1917

is something which can be hardly reconciled with any sort of revolutionary consistency. It made possible the gathering of forces, the accumulation of revolutionary energies which already manifested itself in a renewed drive of the anarchist movement to deepen the revolution and push it vigorously toward its logical end. The forces of the popular revolution are far from being exhausted, and where this is the case no amount of skilful juggling of positions in the government will ever succeed in blocking the forward course of the revolution. Such is the most elementary lesson of all the great revolutions of the past and the imminent swing of the revolution to its next alternating phase will more than confirm it.

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## The New Economy in Catalonia

L. FRANK

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For the American mind, unacquainted with the tradition and character of the proletariat of Spain, it may be difficult to conceive how a people, oppressed for centuries by church and state, and living under an absolute tyranny of the privileged classes could emerge suddenly into an era of light and hope and without confusion, without hesitation in the midst of all the horrors of war could get to work and set up the most profoundly revolutionary economic and social structure ever conceived. The dream of Bakunin is no longer utopian, no longer a myth; it is a living reality in Spain.

Underlying this prodigious achievement of the Spanish workers is a profound faith in mankind, an intense love of life, and a most vigorous sense of strength of the individual capacities of the people. It is these qualities which made possible the ever increasing growth of the Anarchist movement in Spain under the able leadership of the CNT-FAI. The Anarchist Federation of Iberia (FAI) represents the ideas, the hope and faith of Anarchism; and the National Confederation of Labor (CNT) represents the practice and realization of the Anarchist program in the economic field. And its basis is the well known Syndicate (Industrial Union).

The economic structure of Catalonia is predominantly under the direction of the anarcho-syndicalist organizations (CNT-FAI). Important industrial centers such as Vich and Grànollers are operated entirely on the collectivization principle. In agriculture, extensive areas in Aragon and Catalonia are cultivated and administered under the more advanced forms of libertarian communism. The town of Fraga, with its 9000 inhabitants and the territory of Bujaraloz down to the front lines, represent today a definite accomplishment of the anarchist principles of emancipation of the masses on the basis of free individual support of the common good.

Briefly, let us glance at this simply constructed economic unit in actual operation. First of all, it is a-political and its structure follows a strictly scientific orientation of production, distribution and consumption of goods. The industrial Syndicate is organized as a corporate body with its competent technical and administrative staffs, which assume the total direction of the individual enterprises, shops and factories comprising its branch. The purchase and distri-

bution of raw materials, the sale of the products, the payment of wages and the distribution of profits and losses are all exclusive functions of the Syndicate. It is the cornerstone of the new order of things in Spain.

By a system of delegates and committees, from the factory to the syndicate and from the branch Syndicate to the local federation, and thence to the regional and finally national committees, the cohesion of all administrative and operating functions is assured on a federalistic basis. Under the tragic circumstances of the defensive war of independence and freedom against the combined ruthlessness of international fascism, there are the natural problems of finance, aggravated by the limitations of foreign trade and great lack of foreign currency; all of which call for compromise with the local and national government. But in spite of these difficulties, the basic industries of Catalonia comprising the war industries of food, clothing and munitions, the public works, and the industries of transport are all functioning with the maximum efficiency and results. The accomplishments of the anarcho-syndicalists organizations of Catalonia call forth the admiration of outstanding economists and public men from all parts of the world.

What is the most amazing is the ready response and enthusiasm of the workers themselves: the capacity for organization, the spontaneous development of competent leadership and direction, the effective adjustments to successively new and difficult problems, calling for prompt solutions. All the various and complicated factors inherent in the creation of a new economic order out of chaotic conditions of the past are met with the same heroism, the same sacrifice and the same undaunted, constructive spirit as in the line of battle at the front. The militants of the CNT, for years grouped around their Syndicates in tireless, unwavering and ceaseless struggle against plutocracy, were never interested in simply an increase of wages or the right of collective bargaining. Their interest has never been simply that of material advantage; but that of destroying all the iniquity and all the injustice of a system which exploited and enslaved them all for the benefit of a privileged few. The ideal of social justice, freedom of education, all the fullness of a free life which should be the product of work is the aspiration of the new economic order, already a living reality in process of realization in revolutionary Spain.



# An Open Letter to Leon Trotsky

DAVID LAWRENCE

(Continued from Cover Page)

of one political group? And who insists more strenuously than Leon Trotsky (even today) that such a dictatorship is necessary.

Conditions in Russia today horrify you. Were things different when you were in power? Let us see...

Stalin is betraying the Revolution, you claim, when he connives and makes treaties with Imperialist nations; the Franco-Soviet military pact is an abomination, making French gendarmes of the French Communist Party. Granted that this is true, you must admit surely, that such a policy did not originate in the unimaginative mind of Stalin. A former Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Leon Trotsky, set a worthy precedent for Stalin when he made a treaty with the Kaiser, the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. Did this shameless capitulation to Imperialist Germany make you a gendarme of the Kaiser? Let the facts testify. The peasants in the territories that you gave to Germany did not intend to let a scrap of paper wrest from them the freedom that they had won with their blood during the Civil War. When the left Socialist-Revolutionists called for peasant uprisings to oppose the German invaders, workers and peasants all over Russia rose to the aid of their brothers in Ukraina and White Russia. But the Communist Party of Russia had made a treaty with the Kaiser, so Leon Trotsky ordered the Russian army to pursue and suppress these partisan units. Who was the gendarme then?

And when the emissary of Imperialist Germany, Mirbach, was slain, as a warning to the Junkers that the revolutionary working class of Russia was not ready to sacrifice itself for a treaty, were you not once again forced to act the police spy.

You demanded that the man who committed the deed, a Left Socialist-Revolutionist, be denounced by his party and delivered into the hands of the police. It would seem that, in condemning the Stalinist foreign policy, you forget that he might very well have learned it from you.

You are the Father, Stalin the Son, and Lenin the Holy Ghost. How can you with consistency ask for freedom and tolerance in Russia. Lenin, the only man you call Master, said of Freedom that it is a "bourgeois prejudice". After the October Revolution yours was the hangman's duty of suppressing those who protested the concentration of power into the hands of the Bolshevik Party. Were you tolerant when you "liquidated" all those who opposed the rule of your clique? Were you less ruthless than Stalin when you smashed the groups of Left Socialist-Revolutionists, the Anarchists, and the non partisans, with whom you had fought side by side against the Russian bourgeoisie. Do you remember your campaign of vilification and slander

against Nestor Makhno, Anarchist leader of the Ukraine partisan troops who drove the hordes of the intervention from the Ukrainian steppes. "Bandit", you called him, when he demanded free Soviets. These tactics are mirrored today by Communist brats who go about in the New York Subways pasting up little arsenic green labels that read simply *Trotsky-Poison*. Character assassination has always been a Bolshevik weapon.

Today you cry out to the four corners of the world about the cruelties suffered by your followers in Russian jails and concentration camps. How were political prisoners treated when you were the bright star on the Russian horizon and Stalin was still the "grey spot of the Revolution?" How did you deal with those who opposed the regime of Lenin and Trotsky when the trail was being blazed that Stalin could later follow with such ease?

Do you remember Maria Spiridonova? Of course you do; her life symbolized the social revolution. In 1906, when she was only 18 years old, she committed an *attentat* against the detested Gen. Lukhanovsky, Gov. of Tambov Province. Her punishment for this act included rape, burning with cigarettes, beatings, and other Czarist niceties. But through it all she remained contemptuous of her tormentors, a true heroine of the Russian people. Her death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment and she was exiled to Siberia where she remained until twelve years later the Revolution opened the prison door for her. Despite delicate health (tuberculosis contracted in the Siberian wastes) she threw all her energies into the work of the Revolution. However, her freedom was short lived; the Revolution meant too much for her to see it turned into a mere tail to the Bolshevik dog; and so in 1919 the prison doors once again closed behind her... not as a prisoner of the Czar but as a prisoner of Trotsky.

Do you remember Ekaterina Bulatova whom you exiled to Siberia for being a member of the Left Socialist-Revolutionists? Perhaps you recall that she was treated so humanely by your Tcheka that she committed suicide there...

Do you remember, Leon Trotsky, your written answer to the group of foreign revolutionists who visited Lenin after the 10th Congress of the C. P. S. U. to protest that political prisoners, with which your jails were full to overflowing, were being horribly mistreated.

You spoke of the "stern law of revolutionary expediency" (Doesn't Stalin sing the same tune?) "*as being your supreme law above all other considerations*". Political prisoners, both men and women, were on a hunger strike in the Taganka prison. Protests poured into your office from workers organizations all over the world. You answered them: "The hunger strike is actually kept up by the false hope that the Soviet Government will, under the

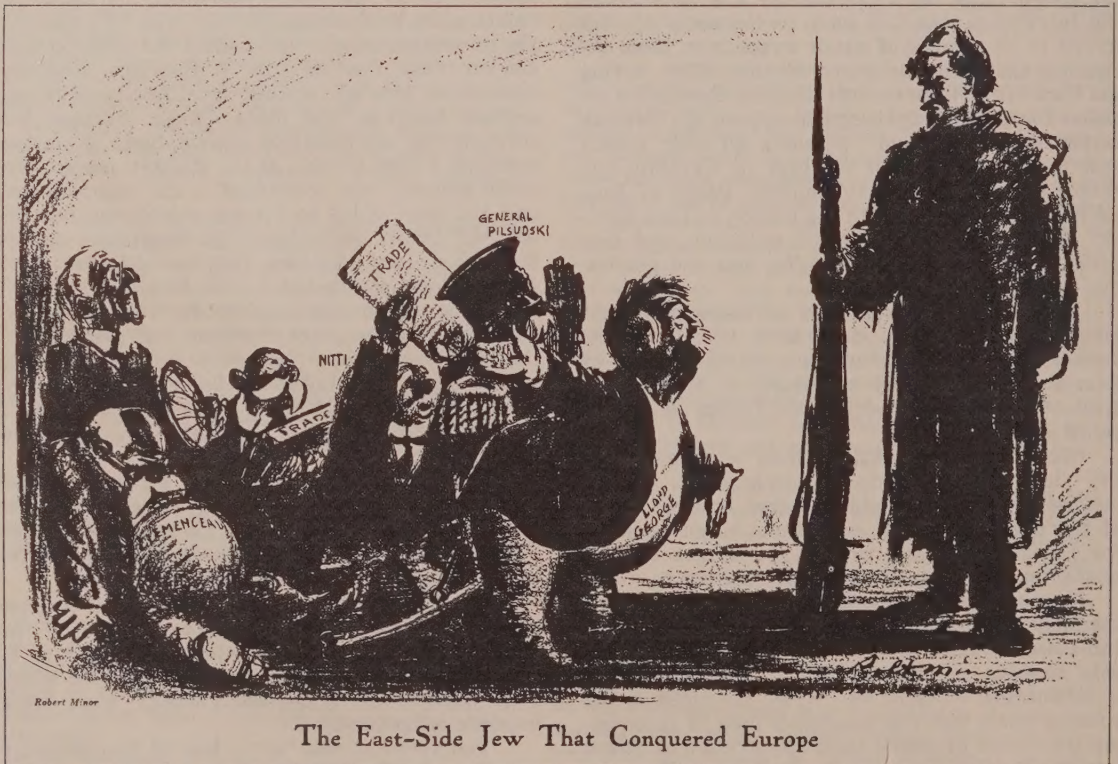


influence of the intervention of insufficiently informed foreign delegates, commit the error, approaching a crime, and release its irreconcilable enemies....." A short time ago in the *New York Times* you wrote with contempt of the Stalin government because it forces political prisoners to "their last refuge, the hunger strike". From a man of your mental qualities, one might expect, at least, consistency... Comrade Trotsky!

Look back through the years, Leon Trotsky; it is 1921 in the city of Petrograd. The civil war is over. Wrangel, the last hope of the intervention, had been defeated. Now the people are preparing to reap some of the fruits that they had sown with their blood and toil. But the Communist Party had its grip on the country and its fear of losing state power brought misery and bitterness to the people. The revolutionary workers of Petrograd rose in a huge spontaneous strike movement. At this time you were offering compromises to all the Capitalist governments of Europe. But you had no thoughts of compromise for the revolutionary workers of Petrograd. You put down their strike movement by the use of Kurstonti, Communist students from the

military academy, by wholesale arrests, by lock-outs by suppressing labor organizations, by "extraordinary martial law". This dirty work you put in charge of none other than Comrade Zinoviev (who also learned something about Frankensteins).

Not far off was the Kronstadt fort and naval base. The sailors of Kronstadt, who had been the backbone of your fighting forces were dismayed at your treatment of the Petrograd workers for, while they were the staunchest supporters of the Soviet system, they were wholeheartedly opposed to the dictatorship of a political party. The sailors of Kronstadt passed a resolution demanding free elections to the Kronstadt Soviet and at the same time a committee of sailors was sent to Petrograd to study the situation there. When the committee returned a public meeting was called by the first and second battalions of the Baltic Fleet. Sixteen thousand sailors, red army men, and workers attended. The chairman of the meeting was the Communist Vassiliev. The President of the RSFR, Kalinin, and the Communist Commissar of the Baltic Fleet, Kuzmin, were present and addressed the meeting. At this meeting a resolution was drawn up and



The East-Side Jew That Conquered Europe

We lifted the above cartoon from a 1919 issue of "The Liberator". It was drawn, as you can see, by none other than that loyal Stalinist bootlicker, Robert Minor, who, we must admit (not without some shame) once considered himself an Anarchist. This drawing was done when Trotsky was at the top of the Soviet heap. Today, Minor, a real Communist Party hack, is forced in his declining years to outdo his Party comrades at the game of Trotsky-baiting and falsifying history, lest he himself be suspect for his once unqualified admiration of Lenin's aide-de-camp. The caption appended to the cartoon appeared with the original and its condescending tone towards Trotsky as a Jew is hardly in keeping with the current C. P. accusations that Trotsky is an enemy of the Jews.



passed by a tremendous majority. According to your Communist commissars the Kronstadt sailors were counter-revolutionary rogues. What were their "counter-revolutionary" demands? Refresh your memory... they were: elections for new Soviets by secret ballot... freedom of speech and press for workers and peasants... freedom of assembly for labor unions and peasants organizations... liberation of political prisoners of Socialist parties... the election of a commission to review the cases of those held in prisons and concentration camps... to abolish political bureaus because no one party should be given special privileges in the propagation of its ideas or receive financial support of the Government for such purposes... to equalize the rations of all who work.... Are these the demands of the counter-revolution?

How did you answer these heroes? Did you really believe that these men who had faced death time without number would cringe before the threats of your Communist Commisar? "If you want open warfare" your spokesman said, "you shall have it, for the Communists will not give up the reins of government. We will fight to the bitter end." The Kronstadt sailors were not old women. After such provocation they simply sent the communists on their way and retained your two commissars as hostages. They then elected a new Kronstadt Soviet and proceeded to defend themselves.

Do you remember the campaign of slander and prevarication that you started. Do you remember the *prikhaz* you signed with Lenin in which you denounced the Kronstadt movement as a mutiny inspired by White Guard and Interventionist forces. (How closely Stalin follows your example when he accuses you, of plotting with foreign militarists).

Lenin in a truthful moment let the cat out of the bag, however, when he said "The Kronstadt sailors did not want the counter-revolution but neither did they want us".

How you hated these men who opposed the dictatorship of the Communist party! Do you remember how you boasted (to your everlasting shame!) "*I'll shoot them down like partridges!*"

Pitiless history reminds us that you carried out your threat. The Kronstadt garrison consisted of 14,000 men, 10,000 of them being sailors. They died under your guns — but not like partridges. They fought against your mass of picked troops with the same courage that distinguished them throughout the Revolution. The odds were too heavy. Soon the streets of Kronstadt ran rivers of blood. Do you speak with contempt of Thiers! Do you shout of Thermidor!

History has a way of playing practical jokes even on its most favored children. In 1921 you mowed down the Kronstadt sailors whose "counter-revolutionary" activity consisted largely in the demand for a secret ballot. In 1928, when Stalin was crushing your opposition mercilessly, do you remember how you shouted for a secret ballot. Do you remember how those who sided with you in open voting became marked men and how soon none would take the chance? Clever Karl Radek (who

apparently was not quite clever enough) said to you at this time: "Who should know better than you, Comrade Trotsky, that the secret ballot is a counter-revolutionary instrument?" The inference, I think, is clear.

There is no need to go more completely into the history of political persecutions in the Soviet Union when Trotsky was top dog and not Stalin. Such material is readily available elsewhere. It is sufficient to note that whenever a hand was raised in dissent you were quite as merciless in your reaction as Stalin is today. The Social-Democrats, the Socialist-Revolutionists and the Anarcho-Syndicalists felt the terrible weight of your mailed fist. The list of your victims makes Stalin's recent excesses seem like the maneuvering of a Boy Scout Troop.

You manufactured the rope for Stalin's hangmen. You gave them the right and the power. Even today, after all the terrible years, you still insist that the Russian people need the dictatorship of a political party (led by Trotsky, of course, instead of Stalin... that will make all the difference). The Russian Communist form of authoritarianism is quite all right with you. You reiterate that Russia today is a "Workers' State". You hang on to this contention like a drowning man to a straw. Why do you constantly repeat such manifest nonsense? Face the truth, Comrade Trotsky!

You ascribe the social inequalities in the "Socialist Fatherland", (where a literary hack may receive 10,000 rubles for a single "Ode to Stalin" while a simple worker toils for 100 rubles a month) to the Stalinist bureaucracy. Was there equality under Lenin and Trotsky? In your time were the Russian people not divided into 39 categories for receiving rations and wages? Do you still feel such objections are expressions of "petty - bourgeois equalitarianism"?

Trotsky was the teacher; Stalin the faulty pupil. You speak with righteous contempt of the "confessions" that dominate the present trials in Russia. Do you remember a little incident of confessions in a previous trial?

In 1923, twelve Socialist-Revolutionists were on trial for their lives before a Bolshevik court. The charges against them were very much like those framed against the defendants in the present Moscow trial: espionage, wrecking, terrorism, plotting with foreign powers, etc. The "twelve who were to die" covered themselves with honor and your court with shame by their brave principled defense (so different from your Bolshevik comrades). After they were sentenced to death the verdict was submitted for examination to a convention of the Bolshevik Party which was sitting in Moscow at the time. The convention voted almost to a man to change the sentence to banishment from Russia; *with but three exceptions; Trotsky, Stalin and Bucharin who insisted that before any such mercy could be shown the defendants must first sign "confessions" negating all the principled statements that they made at the trial so that the name of your party might be whitewashed in the eyes of the international Socialist movement.* Apparently you too be-



lieved in the political efficacy of "confessions".

You contend that several of the defendants in the present Moscow Trial were stool-pigeons. Should this surprise you? In 1921, a check was made of the prisoners in the Butirki prison... of 190 prisoners, 140 admitted that they had been offered freedom if they would spy upon and bear witness against their fellow political prisoners.

What pitiful, craven creatures, your erstwhile comrades showed themselves to be during the recent court proceedings. You spoke of them as completely demoralized men, lick-spittles of the Stalinist bureaucracy... Certainly, these poor creatures, were demoralized men, *but the acid that corroded their more manly fibres was not Stalin, but the political philosophy that guided their lives. Bolshevism*, is a system without a morality, built on expediency, with the end always justifying the means, with political power its only ideal, with freedom and truth "bourgeois prejudices". If one were to seek for the most perfect prophet of this amorality he would have to travel as far, perhaps, as Mexico City.

In 1919, Enrico Malatesta, the beloved Italian

Anarchist, wrote words that are particularly pointed today:

"Lenin, Trotsky and their companions are certainly sincere revolutionists" — as they understand the revolution, and, they will not betray it, but they prepare governmental methods (*quadri governativi* — governmental pictures, literally) that will serve those that will come, who will profit from the revolution and kill it. They will be the first victims of their own method, and with them I fear will fall the revolution. And history will repeat itself, *mutatis mutandis*; it was the dictatorship of Robespierre that brought Robespierre to the guillotine and prepared the way for Napoleon."

This was not a bad piece of prophesying for an unfortunate man (whom you classed with the "anti-parliamentary cretins") forced to blunder through life without the beaconlight of Marxism to light his path.

In short, Comrade Trotsky, if a man builds a guillotine for someone else's neck, we cannot be expected to weep too bitterly if he gets caught under it himself.

With revolutionary greetings,  
David Lawrence

## The Russian Jacobins

The last phase of the Jacobin rule during the French revolution was marked by a series of executions of its leading figures, every one of whom was charged with monstrous crimes of the most unbelievable nature. Danton, Desmulin, Hebert, Chaumette, Anacharsis Klostz — the most famous orators and organizers of the revolution — they all mounted the guillotine, accused of acting as agents for the interventionist powers, of plotting to rob banks, of being counterfeiters, forgers, embezzlers and accomplices of known criminals and bandits of the country.

Is there any intelligent man now who, little as he may know about the French revolution, takes seriously any of those accusations? In less than a generation the reputation of all those revolutionists was cleared from the least trace of libelous charges still clinging to their names. And now even ordinary text books find it necessary to point out that the sensational trials of those prominent figures of the revolution were the best indication of the process of degeneration of the revolution, which soon, rolling over the head of the instigator of those trials, Robespierre, broke into foam at the feet of an adventurer and usurper like Napoleon.

The French Jacobins of that time did not have at their disposal the terrific power of a totalitarian state. Their technique of staging infamous trials did not reach the subtlety and perfection of the present rulers of Soviet Russia. There were no forced confessions in those trials, nor was the public opinion of that time so thoroughly demoralized by a powerful government as it is in the present day Russia.

And with all that can there be any doubt as to

the verdict of history on this matter? If intelligent people can be bribed and bullied into a public profession of their belief in Trotsky's close cooperation with Hitler, who will ever risk having his sanity seriously questioned by making such ludicrous statements at a time when the terrific pressure of the most despotic government of our time will have been in itself but a sad memory of a misguided revolution?

The historic perspective afforded by subsequent developments of the French revolution allowed the following generation to visualize clearly the role of those monstrous trials and executions in driving the revolution toward its humiliating end. Anyone can see now how important a landmark those trials were in the process of degeneration of the high hopes of the revolution to the low level reached by the crowning of the erstwhile revolutionary general with the title of Holy Emperor.

The twenty years that have elapsed since the beginning of the Russian revolution have already given us a wide enough perspective to descry the same landmarks in the course of its degeneration. The elevation of a mediocre revolutionary figure to the rank of the "father of the people", "son of the nations", the "Leader" (Duce, Fuehrer), leaves no doubt as to the trends of this process. And in this process, needing only a few formal touches to bring it to the low level reached by Napoleonic France, the monstrous perversions of justice and fair play which in Moscow go now by the name of trials, play as prominent a role as the similar trials-amalgams (known criminals were deliberately drawn in to those trials to discredit the defendants) played in pushing the French revolution down the precipitous road of moral degeneration and distortion of its original aims.



# Gentlemen, Be Seated!

JOSEPH ZACK

The sit-down strike has now become an American institution. Courts or no courts, fascism or democracy, this is the form of strike for the day, and the horizon of the future is inscribed with these two horoscopic words.

Making a drive against this type of action will net the bourgeoisie the choice between only two variants: to accommodate themselves to a series of civil wars, or to accept a lesser evil, the Committee for Industrial Organization (C. I. O.)

The United States has the perfect industrial staging for the sit down strike. Its large scale production, its delicately interdependent conveyor technique determines this fact. Notwithstanding the fact that General Motors and the ruling class as a whole had the shock of its life when a relatively small number of men were able to swing into action a whole mass, the mechanical requisites for such precipitations exists here in great abundance.

The safe and sane methods of struggle perfected by trade union fakerdom hitherto, are upset in the manner of the familiar appletart. The processes of modern production have taught the workers far more exactly than could ever be conveyed to them by, any "scientific" pedagogue how to defend their interests and when workers defend themselves, vigorously, positively, they are in fact attacking capitalism.

## Strategic advantages of the sit-down

Let us enumerate some of the direct advantages of the sit-down method of struggle:

(a) It stops the scabbing inside the factories of the "weak sisters" and does not permit the entry of professional strike-breakers from without. Keeping the directing personnel on the premises makes the strike doubly effective.

(b) It makes possible quick, all-inclusive organization which is modern in structure (industrial) and is based upon rank and file representation, (shop council).

(c) It facilitates the rapid mobilization of the sympathetic population outside the factories who are dependent upon the income of the striking workers.

(d) Its effectiveness makes for quick settlement at the place of work debunking thereby much of the alleged super-intelligent abilities and powers of the "leader".

(e) In the event of the threat of wholesale layoffs, the workers can by this method force the employers to retain all workers, turning this mode of struggle into a fight against unemployment.

The advent of the sit-down as an organizing and strike method will revolutionize the whole trade union movement just as it has done in France. Sweeping action and large scale organization become possible to a degree not known before.

## Roosevelt, Lewis and Company

If the *Times* or the great Stalin do not know this, theirs is the ignorance, — Roosevelt's the schemes.

Roosevelt's New Deal capitalism cannot be put over without mass pressure. Not the pressure of the pious ballot box, but organized and controlled mass pressure. To be sure, the form of this pressure would be democratic; or would be fascistic only in suggestiveness. Here is where the big bourgeois must swallow some unpleasant pills. He will have to unconvince himself of the sanctity of his own, dear, intimate, private corporations. To effect such a "psychological" change only the masses can be used; for only the masses who are on their way to complete emancipation can be loaded with the cross of "socialistic" State Capitalism, whether in democratic or fascist form. By now the wits of the class thinking workers have been amply dulled, thanks to the Comintern. It is relatively a simple task to persuade the worker that state ownership with all its evils (i. e., wage-labor, the market, money-material inequality) is socialism. The crime of it!

By mutual understanding, John L. Lewis and F. D. Roosevelt are fellow travelers on the road to State Capitalism. F. D. R. is the directing brain, John Lewis the organizing hand. This understanding does not preclude minor differences as to tempo between them, and the shadow-boxing resulting from these differences is a perfect tactical hocus-pocus to delude the opponents who may be credulous or innocent.

Into the Roosevelt family can fit not only "solid" men like Lewis and Sidney Hillman, but pink socialists, liberals, butterflies, Stalinites and a veritable menagerie of salvationists also are accommodate; each doing his share to produce those artistic conflicts and differences so necessary to fill out a background of joyous harmony. With Roosevelt marches the future capitalism, the sort that takes "social responsibility", the bearer of which is the modern middle classes and to which the big capitalists are forced more and more to bend their knees. Labor once more is taken into tow upon a new basis; but this time, alas, not for as long as in the glorious era of private capitalism,

Were it not for the revolutionary incipency of the masses of 1932-'33, Roosevelt's New Deal could not have reached first base. Nor would he be granted dictatorial authority by all interested in the salvaging of capitalism. Without the mass pressure gathering momentum now, the New Deal of the second term would collapse. The test to which Capital is put in this day on the industrial battlefield of the Middle West accelerates the New Deal program, the full logic of which is government control of industry.

It is with the foregoing facts as a point of



vantage that it is all possible to view the politics brewing within and circling round the General Motors conflict.

On one side were all the New Deal forces with the strike as the object of manipulations for their further aims. On the other side, the Old Deal capitalists who control most of the big industries of the Middle West, including General Motors. On the side of the strike the united front includes the C. I. O., the Socialists, Stalinists Trotzkyites, Lovestoneites and even some "syndicalists", all of whom were represented directly or indirectly in the strike leadership. John L. Lewis is the supreme coordinator and presiding judge over their differences.

### Labor militancy versus Bourbon arrogance

What shocked the bourgeoisie and made Lewis a new Red bugaboo is the fact that Lewis sanctioned the sit-down.

*The truth is that Lewis opposed the sit-down as late as 1936, in the Rubber strike. So to fancy him favoring the sit-down is to draw a picture of the impossible. The sit-down sanctioned itself. The workers as a whole recognized the superiority of this type of strategy and took proper leave to sanction by doing.* What Lewis's official sanction indicates is that he as well as Roosevelt is aware that the wagon of State Capitalism cannot be driven without condoning in militant labor considerable militant expression. Nor can one retain his own position of leadership by bucking labor at every move. The fact also, that the A. F. of L. through its major craft unions stepped forward on the side of private capitalism in the Maritime strike had undoubtedly a kinetic effect upon Lewis's sanctioning hand. The A. F. L. in this situation has however only a "moral" say, due to the fact that this antique has practically no members in the G. M. plants.

At this juncture, anyway, New Dealism smeared over with radicalism is quite the thing. It is not, naturally, out of the question that such "reds" as Sidney Hillman, John Lewis, the Socialists and, moving from left to right, the Stalinists, may not be dispensed with. Another and likelier variant is, however, that these people will be used as cudgels against all militants. Whoever does not hold up for sale the interests of the workers, he may well beware of them.

### The settlement, victory or defeat?

As the "Vanguard" goes to press the settlement of the strike is announced. William Green, president of the A. F. of L. rushes to proclaim its defeat. Quite true, the strike did not achieve its demands, but it did obtain things from the arrogant rulers of this corporation, never conceded before in any of the big mass-production industries. About one third of what was asked for was attained and that is a good beginning.

Most important of all, the method of striking which made this settlement possible has been dramatized to the American workers, a method which makes it possible for the workers to withdraw not only their own living labor power as customary by

the walkout strike, but also, the labor power materialized in the machines thus combining the tools of production with themselves *against the Capitalist*. This new form of struggle is the real guarantee that this agreement will not only be lived up to, but will be reduced to a mere beginning of what is yet to come. The masses learned something about how to use their power in modern industry and develop their own numbers. The fight between the New Deal and Old Deal Capitalism favored them and reflected itself in the eagerness of the Trade Union wing of the New Deal to score as much of a victory as possible.

If William Green speaks of this as a "stinging defeat" it is a defeat indeed for Green and his royal family. The A. F. of L. in fact did as much as it could to make it a defeat. Having failed, their declarations are still fathered by that thought. Seeing their future cemetery in front of them they whistled themselves courage. The sit-down will spread and consolidate the auto victory. True enough the masses and their new methods are being used as ammunition to fight the New Deal's fight against the Old Dealers and after that phase of the fight is concluded with the Old Dealers in Roosevelt's pocket, both the sit-down and the walkout may be declared outlawed by the then combined pack of enemies, but the masses, having found a more powerful method of asserting their power, will not let go so easily if at all.

The sit-down on the side of labor may well play the role that State Capitalism is playing on the side of Capital. The one is the road of conquest of the tools of production, the other is the road of reaction under conditions of Capitalist decay. The problems of our future are buried in these two new class instrumentalities of power, both still embryonic, but on the march.

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## Kropotkin as Historian

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(Continued from Page two)

the communes, since the latter as soon as they were captured by the radicalized intellectuals became harmful and even dangerous if the people permitted them to be centralized. But in general the people instinctively felt that centralization was the wrong way. Especially the communes of Paris ardently defended the principle of federalism.

Summing up, Kropotkin declares that in every revolution the people try to go much further than their leaders, who, in pursuance of their own selfish interests, are out to legalize the revolution in a fictitious manner, the sole aim of it being to save the bourgeoisie from destruction.

From these attempts at saving the bourgeoisie springs the terror — not from the terroristic instinct of the people as Taine maintains. Terror is the despair of the revolution which suddenly finds itself on the brink of abyss. Terror does not express the soul of the people which is by its nature creative and not destructive.

There are other important philosophical ideas to be found in Kropotkin's works about revolution and its role in the process of historical development. They certainly deserve a discussion but we will postpone it for another time.



# New York W. P. A. Unions

A relief union, like other unions, should have three main objectives: To keep the workers on the job (or relief rolls); to constantly fight for better working (or relief) conditions; and to demonstrate and educate the workers to the fact that only under Socialism can they really attain the first two aims, and that only through persistent and relentless class struggle can they attain Socialism. In the cases of the Works Progress Administration and direct relief, the battle to reach these objectives is probably more clear cut than on other jobs. The various relief administrations are continuously reducing their rolls. Relief is definitely inadequate, keeping the unemployed on the verge of starvation in order to force them to grab the first job offered, even if it is under scab conditions. Though compelled by legislation to pay prevailing hourly wages, the WPA often decides its own "prevailing" wage, and then always cuts working hours so that the worker's income is still sub-standard. Sick leave, vacations, paid holidays, self management are missing. Discrimination, mis-management, stupid officials, red tape are over-abundant. Relief recipients know well enough by now that their plight is not momentarily caused by a temporary depression, but that they are the victims of decaying capitalism.

How do these organizations carry on their work? Are they successful or not? What is the outlook for the future? A glance at some of the actions of the past few months should help in answering these questions.

"To keep the workers on the job". Every WPA worker is in constant fear of receiving the well known "pink slip". The WPA went about firing people in a rather haphazard manner until last Fall. Then a special survey unit was set up to investigate the need of every worker for his job. Investigators were drawn from the various white-collar categories and were paid salaries as high as \$45 weekly. The unions involved would not instruct their members not to accept these stool-pigeon jobs, on the theory that it would be far better to have friendly snoopers and spies than unfriendly ones. There were to be two parts to this investigation: one on the job and one at home. The cry was raised to boycott these investigations as the method of preventing the Administration from receiving information which was to be the basis for wholesale dismissals.

The Workers Alliance, City Projects Council, and WPA Teachers Union all decided (after a city-wide Stalinist faction meeting which passed on the plan) to submit to the field (job) investigation, and boycott the home investigation because: they weren't strong enough to stop the investigation on the job (where they are organized); boycott on the job would only single out militant workers for dismissal; public opinion would be behind the investigation to weed out chiselers, and so the snoop questions must be answered. As if this splendid logic were not enough, the poor bewildered worker was told he must boycott the home investigation to prevent checking the information given on the job, and he was then showered with literature telling him to "Preserve the Sanctity of his Home", also he should not forget that "A Man's Castle is his home", and then too, this spying at home is un-American.

How did the various opposition groups (mostly controlled by the Socialist Party) jump into the battle to expose the Stalinists' tactics and ideology? Most of them maintained a strict silence! They gave these reasons: complete boycott was impossible due to lack of strength of the unions, and partial boycott was foolish and ineffective. Why not tell this to the membership? Because, so they said, the home boycott was going to fail anyway, but that the opposition

was not strong enough to convince the members that this policy was wrong. If they did object, then the Stalinists would only blame them for the failure. Only "working class leaders of the highest caliber" could perfect such a position.

Then came the field investigation. Most workers were interrogated at one place — the Armory at 14th St. and Sixth Avenue. A mass picket line could have kept the workers out of there. Instead everyone took his examination, while small picket lines objected and warned the project workers to protect their homes from investigation.

Then came the home investigations, with a warning from Col. Somervell (WPA Administrator for New York City) that failure to give information to the home investigator would lead to immediate dismissal. The unions immediately called off the boycott! You see, comrade worker, the real issue is not the investigations, but the dismissals; and so, the explanation went, we will fight dismissals when they come. And they certainly did come. Well over 16,000 were fired due to the survey, and still more dismissals are going on. The figures show a surprisingly small number of workers appealing to the unions for help, or perhaps it is not so surprising after all.

Though some militant actions have been taken as a result of pressure from union members (e.g. the sit down of the artists) the white-collar union leadership, both Communist and Socialist, prefer to discourage anything which might make them lose their "respectability".

"To constantly fight for better working conditions". In the summer of 1935, the Works Progress Administration started to supplant the CWA and other organizations by inaugurating President Roosevelt's security wage scale of \$19 to \$94 a month. The New York City workers went on strike then for a 10 per cent increase in this scale. They got the increase — and a \$13 bonus! This should serve as an example for most people, unless of course you happen to be running a WPA union.

Threatened with lowering hours to as few as 15 a week if hourly rates were equivalent to trade union rates, many Stalinists were afraid to press the battle for their theory of socially useful work is shot to pieces with reduced hours. On the white-collar projects much of the struggle for better working conditions has been diverted to a militant fight for professional recognition.

The long-range political and economic perspective of these unions shows them at their worst. Fellow worker, you who realize how the WPA mistreats you, you are starved and threatened and demoralized. You have to fight like hell for your lousy job. Obviously you won't stand for this forever. What is the solution? "PERMANENCY", and "JOIN THE FARMER LABOR (right now American Labor) PARTY" say our Stalinist "leaders".

We are told we must fight for Congress to appropriate enough money for a WPA job for every unemployed person in this country. Since unemployment is now a permanent problem, and since every project is, or should be, socially useful to the community, all WPA projects must be made permanent. Can you imagine a capitalist country giving every unemployed person a permanent job at trade union wages and conditions, with security and tenure? Comrades Roosevelt, Morgan, DuPont, Sloan, Ford, etc., would gladly do the American thing and remove all fears of anyone losing his job, because if he was fired or locked-out, why then he could immediately get on permanent WPA! Can you imagine so-called working class parties leading the unemployed to believe in such a possibility? Or asking for such a form of "state socialism" with the government setting up a vast network of jobs entirely divorced from regular industry? No connection is made between the problems of the employed and the unemployed.

Especially in the white-collar and professional (strictly



Stalinist) unions, Permanency is the slogan above all. Teacher, doctor, clerk, artist, musician, research worker, etc., all are doing useful work. (How the world got along before the WPA no one knows.) Let the government take over your project, make it permanent, put you under civil service automatically, and end all your troubles. No more insecurity, no more starvation wages, no more discrimination, plenty of professionalism, no more worries, and no more class struggle!

Internally many of the unions are as bureaucratic as only the Stalinists can be. Any opposition is a disruptive force. However a real consistent opposition is almost absent. Most of it is impotent, and raises its head only when excessively provoked. Even a small group in these organizations could soon gain support if it only would relentlessly put before the membership a definite left-wing attack on the reformist ideals and bureaucratic tactics of the leadership and present a constructive, militant program.

A long-range program is needed, one that will genuinely tie up the problems of the unemployed with the rest of the working class. Better conditions for those working, a shorter work week, would be of some immediate help. The unemployed taking over closed down factories and mills would be an immense step forward, and above all would concretely point out to all workers the direction in which they must go. The unemployed are not a distinct class of people whose problems can be solved by Farmer-Laborites who promise adequate relief, or by special permanent government works which are distinct and above ordinary industries and occupations. Uncle Sam will be no better a boss than J. P. Morgan. Eventually, and this must be constantly pointed out to the project workers, they and their brothers in private industry will have to rise together against the ruling class and bring Socialism into this country.

Instead of this, what do we hear in union offices? Take the red out of that picket sign, do you want to antagonize the public? No, we can't ask for help for a revolutionary Spain, do you want to provoke the reactionaries? Give us shoes and condensed milk for the Popular Front in Spain. Pres. Roosevelt double-crossed us. Has your job location got a strong well-working coordinated telegram squad? Has your project got an efficient Permanency Committee? Have you joined your local American Labor Party club? Did you see your Tammany Congressman about the relief appropriation?

"Comrade, of course we believe in the class struggle!" "What?" "Well, you see, we are the realists".

—M. W.

## Dual Unionism

*"If this be treason, make the most of it". — PATRICK HENRY*

FOR more than a half century the conservative labor movement has satisfied itself with maintaining its monopoly of the comparatively insignificant minority of certain skilled crafts. The problem of organizing the thirty million unskilled and semi-skilled workers into fighting unions capable of carrying on the class struggle to its ultimate conclusion was ignored by these self-appointed "leaders". Whenever any organization attempted to deal with this problem by organizing the unskilled and trying to build a strong labor movement, they were immediately denounced as "traitors", wreckers and disrupters, who were intent on destroying the "unity of the labor movement". Unfailingly they raised the cry, "This is a Dual Union. We and only we are the true labor movement; all others are intruders who must be extirpated".

We are not only concerned with the problem of organizing the unorganized. The problem of what KIND of un-

ions will best be able to carry on the battle against capitalism, and what shall be the principles of such unions is just as important.

The fact that millions of workers are organized is by no means a guarantee that they can successfully defend themselves against Fascism. Witness the lamentable collapse of the German labor movement, which was numerically the strongest in the world. It is false to raise the cry of Dual unionism against organizations who conceive of the labor movement as the major weapon that is capable of radicalizing the workers, of leading them to the overthrow of Capitalism. The labor movement is the only organism fit to undertake the titanic task of building the new social order. To build such a movement is absolutely necessary now because we are living in a period of great social upheavals. Woe to the land that fails to build up such fighting movements! Those who deny the need for a revolutionary labor movement are paving the road to Fascism. The establishment of a revolutionary labor movement, far from being dual unionism (as the labor fakers interpret the term) is a historic task that no one who has the slightest pretensions to radicalism has a right to evade.

Those labor unions which accuse certain independent unions and the IWW of the "crime" of dual unionism must prove that the revolutionary principles of these organizations are expressed by themselves. A little reflection will show that no organization similar to the IWW exists, that revolutionary syndicalism and industrial unionism are not represented by either the A. F. of L. or the much vaunted Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO). It may also be called to the attention of those who cry "Dual Unionism" that both the A. F. of L. and the C. I. O. are dual unions. For there is no basic difference in principle between the two. Both are in favor of class collaboration, both are intimately connected with the Roosevelt administration and are helping the government to regiment the labor movement into the pattern of the emerging Rooseveltian state capitalism.

The fact that Lewis is now on the better side of Roosevelt is merely the fortuitous result of his political boldness and his ability to ride with the rising wave of spontaneous workers organization and growing militancy of the rank-and-file in the mass production industries.

Both Lewis and Green abhor strikes. Both hate all "troublemakers" (people who fight against dictatorship and gangsterism in both the A. F. of L. and the C. I. O. and insist upon injecting the class struggle into the cordial relations between the "leaders" of the workers and the employing class). The differences between them lie no deeper than the realization of the CIO that there is a rich field for the further domination and exploitation of the workers organizations in organizing the unskilled as they want to be, that is, industrially. But there is no reason why the new outfits will not become the gold mine for the exploitation of labor fakers that Lewis's United Mine Workers of America has been for so many years. There is a crying need for a left-wing labor movement to counteract such tendencies.

Why talk about "dual unionism", ye disciples of Lewis and Co., when it is known that the IWW pioneered the idea of Revolutionary Industrial Unionism 32 years ago? Is it because the kind of Industrial Unionism which the IWW represents cannot be used as a means for the enrichment of a Labor bureaucracy, cannot become a tool for the building of state capitalism?

Workers can be organized in unions which are of a revolutionary nature more effectively than in the type of unions represented by the CIO. The IWW has shown that this can be done in such diverse industries as Metal and Machinery, Lumber, etc. We have seen that unions influenced by the principles of militant unionism can win



strikes. This has been shown by the splendid Maritime Strike on the Pacific coast which was led by the Sailors Union of the Pacific, an organization whose most militant spirits are influenced by the tactics and point of view of the IWW. The same applies to the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipworkers which has successfully defied the power of the shipbuilding trust. There are many similar instances that can be shown to illustrate that the CIO has yet to show a successful strike movement based on real labor solidarity that can compare with the type of clean, militant unionism as represented by the IWW or the Sailors Union of the Pacific who were responsible for the success of the maritime strike on the Pacific Coast.

Shall the revolutionary labor movement desert the cause of the workers, leave the field completely open to the power-hungry opportunists who are fleecing the workers? Does the lie of "dual unionism", that time-worn smoke-screen for the self-seeking elements in American labor movements justify the scrapping of the best revolutionary traditions of the American labor movement? We recognize the need for solidarity in the struggle for better conditions today and for the eventual overthrow of Capitalism, but we owe no loyalty to the new messiahs. We do recognize our responsibility of continuing the class war. We affirm our adherence to the great principles of the class struggle and the ideals of Free Socialism which must be welded into the structure of the militant unionism that is now in process of formation and to which the future belongs.

—S. WEINER

## A Letter from Barcelona

The CNT delegate to the financial department of the Catalonian government, P. Fabregas, proposed a series of financial measures the acceptance of which would assure the efficient functioning of the economy and the defeat of Franco. The Stalinist clique of Madrid opposed this initiative coming from Catalonia, refusing to lend to Catalonia any portion of the billion pesetas constituting the savings of Catalonians kept in the Bank of Spain.

The military efforts of our comrades — Santillan, Garcia Oliver and others — were systematically sabotaged by the Madrid Stalinists, who succeeded in literally starving out the Catalonian militia in respect of arms and munitions. And at the same time Stalinist recruits, armed to their teeth, are kept in the rear doing police service in Alicante, Cartagena, Valencia and other places.

Domenech, the CNT representative, when he was in charge of the Council of Food Supplies of Catalonia, made great efforts to obtain from the Central Government some part of its enormous stocks of grain kept in Ciudad Real. The Minister of Agriculture Uribe, a Stalinist, refused to send even a single pound. This action on the part of the communists placed before our comrades the necessity of carrying out a policy of requisitions, taxation and of rationing out the stocks on hand.

The Stalinists hypocritically took the part of the rich peasants, of the speculators, of the well-to-do consumer against socialistic measures dictated by a revolutionary situation. They accused Domenech of starving out the people and finally succeeded in having him replaced by Comorera (leader of the socialist-communist party, P.S.U.C.) who resorted to the worst form of politics in order to make Barcelona dependent upon Madrid.

The Stalinist agents mingle with the people in the queues in front of the bakeries and disseminate all kinds of false rumors and calumnies directed against the CNT unions. They tell the people that Soviet Russia had sent grain to Barcelona, but the section committees requisitioned

those supplies in order to speculate on their own account. Comorera even hinted about it in his official speech delivered December 24. The section committees are the basic organs of a popular and anti-capitalist revolution and what Comorera is driving at by combatting those organizations is the return to the free market, controlled by speculators and parasites of all sorts.

Incapable of mobilizing the vanguard of the revolution, the Stalinists base their power upon diplomacy, the stocks of gold in the possession of the Central Government and supplies of goods and armaments which they jealously keep to themselves. Their support comes from the civil and military bureaucracy, the middle classes, the reactionary petty bourgeoisie and the most backward elements of the population.

They need the anarchists in order to maintain the war enthusiasm in the agricultural communes and the factories. They need the anarchists as the shock troops of the front, but when the war is ended, they will set themselves the problem of "liquidating" the anarchists. (Ed. Note: According to reports not yet fully confirmed, the P.O.U.M., left wing marxist party, has been suppressed in Madrid. The anarchists need expect no better treatment from the Stalinist hoodlums if the latter become too strong.)

And the means employed in that process of liquidation (and the notorious Margarita Nelson — recently converted to the Stalinist cause — was quite outspoken about it in her statement) will not be those of corruption, slander and boring from within: it will be the "machine gun" that will do the talking.

It is absolutely necessary that the world proletariat should be warned of the present situation which all the "informed people" know so well. Russia represents in Spain a counter-revolutionary force, differing from Germany and Italy only by its insinuating hypocrisy.

From L'ESPAGNE NOUVELLE

## CORRESPONDENCE

### From an I. W. W. Seaman

*The following letter written by a militant I. W. W. striker was sent to us too late to be printed in the last issue of the "Vanguard". It predicts the end of the East Coast maritime strike with startling accuracy. We cannot but contrast the doleful results of the East Coast strike with the epoch-making victory won by the solidarity of the Marine workers of the West Coast. The victory was made possible mainly because of the efforts of the the members of the very militant and uncompromising Sailors' Union of the Pacific, whose watchfulness prevented the stooges of the Communist Party, led by Harry Bridges, from throwing up the sponge.*

*It was this intransigent group which prevented the repetition of the fiasco that took place on the Atlantic Coast. We salute the S. U. P. and the able leadership of Harry Lundberg and the other fellow-workers.*

January 3rd, 1937

Fellow Workers of the Vanguard:

On the Atlantic ports the great maritime strike is petering out. On the tankers it has been altogether called off (the strike committee reported that no ship of that type could be held back anymore). And on the beach, the remaining strikers go about their duties with long faces, and talk of the blunders that have been made, as anybody will do when he suspects himself on the losing side. The only hope left now is the West coast. Out there the strike is still solid and the men undaunted...

Right off the reel, as soon as the strike got under way, the withering effects of the activities of the well organized



but concealed group, the waterfront communists, became evident.

The first thing these people set out to do was to centralize all power into their hands by breaking down the initiative of the strikers. The task was quite difficult for the IWW had coached these same men previously to exact-ly opposite strike methods.

For a while the seamen refused to be made mere card-board picket line strollers, so the communists reverted to their usual methods. Slander; browbeating; outright squeal-ing to the police, as they have tried against militant IWW strikers in the Philadelphia waterfront; and the organiza-tion of two special corps: the Provosts, — men with green bands around their right arms against whom one runs at every corner and waterfront saloon; and the "Finger men": spies, hundreds of them, whose ostensible duties are to dis-cover new places from where scabs are shipped out, but really to spy on their fellow strikers. If a striker innocently utters his displeasure on the way the strike is run, the "Finger man" reports him to the "investigator", who in turn turns him over to another "investigator" and so on along the line.

Rarely a commissar addresses a striker with: comrade, fellow worker or brother; or will you do this or that.... It is: Hey you; Listen you; Now none of your lip; I tell you; and so on. In fact the hostility of the main committees against the scabs is lesser than that against the strikers. A scab can slip a beating and get into the good graces of these committees by the payment of \$5. But if you as a triker say something about policy and you're persistent about it you'll be driven off of the waterfront.

The East Coast strike is killed. It's killed because the communists had a strong grip upon it and because of their natural mistrust of the working class. Something good will come out of it, though, and already reports are coming from the Gulf ports that seamen are coming into the IWW.

—N. B.

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## Dictatorship in Local 89, I. L. G. W. U.

Editor Vanguard

Dear Comrades:

Knowing that your publication is circulated among many of the English speaking members of the International Lad-ies Garment Workers Union, I think it is my duty to call your attention to what is taking place in Local 89 of this union.

Local 89 is allegedly the biggest and most progressive Local Union of America. At the head of it there is a man named Luigi Antonini. He is Secretary-Treasurer, Manager and Dictator of the Local.

First of all it is necessary that your readers know that Antonini has held this job for about two decades. And in order to keep himself in the saddle he has changed colors like the proverbial chameleon.

During all these past years if anybody ever dared to question his leadership or tried to run for the office that Antonini has held since 1917, the sword of Damocles fell over his head. Many were slugged, deprived of places of work, reduced to starvation, for no other reason than that they dared to do what is done every day in the other Locals of the ILGWU without any difficulty.

Most of the Italian labor periodicals have consistently refused to carry any news concerning these abuses.

With the hundreds of thousands of dollars brought in the treasury of Local 89 by the new members that joined as a result of the NRA, Antonini bought publicity and men in order to fortify his position and silence all opposition. He transferred the Secretary-Treasurer of the Dressmakers Joint Board to a different locality because he couldn't be silenced. He succeeded in abolishing all elections for busi-ness agents, organizers, etc. in Local 89. All persons de-sirous of getting an official position must apply to Anto-nini. The applicant must also sign a blank resignation in advance so he can be fired if he does not obey orders.

I exposed the true situation. The only paper that would accept my articles was the Italian IWW paper "Il Proleta-rio". Since the first article appeared both the paper and myself have been subjected to persecution by Antonini and his henchmen.

Not being able to buy or silence me he made fake charges against me. I was expelled from the union, with the right to work where I am now employed. He gave me the right to work only because the scandal would be too great.

This issue is greater than my humble person. It in-volves the thousands and thousands of workers who can-not, through fear or lack of contacts, publicize this scandal-ous condition. Regardless of consequences to myself, this dictatorship must be ended.

—JOSEPH MANGANO

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